



Oceans Protection Plan

Whale Detection and Avoidance Initiative

Background

Vessel traffic is increasing in Canadian waters frequented by endangered whales, increasing the risk of collision. The Government of Canada is committed to protecting these marine mammals and is working to address the threats they face.

What is the Whale Detection and Avoidance Initiative?

The Government of Canada's Whale Detection and Avoidance Initiative provides \$9.1 million to test technologies that can **detect the presence of whales in our waters, almost in real-time**. Some of these technologies include:

- underwater microphones, called hydrophones, that listen for whale sounds
- underwater gliders equipped with hydrophones
- heat-sensing cameras that can detect whales from their body heat

Having up-to-date information on the presence of these whales in areas where they frequent can help mariners avoid vessel collisions with them.

What have we done so far?

- ✓ **Provided funding** to Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia to test and deploy underwater gliders equipped with hydrophones that listen for North Atlantic right whales. When the gliders surface, they transmit data via satellite back to a lab at the university, where it is analyzed by a team of experts.
- ✓ **Tested a whale tracking network** in Active Pass, British Columbia. This project has placed about 25 hydrophones in the Salish Sea to detect and locate Southern Resident killer whales by listening for their vocal sounds.

What's next?

Work will continue to focus on two of Canada's endangered whale species – **North Atlantic right whales** on the East Coast and **Southern Resident killer whales** on the West Coast. This and other science-related initiatives are drawing on the expertise and knowledge of experts to help us better understand the pressures faced by our at-risk marine mammals, and help develop effective management and protection measures.

Protecting endangered whales is another action the Government of Canada is taking to protect our coasts and waterways. The Government is investing \$1.5 billion in the Oceans Protection Plan, a national strategy that is improving marine safety and responsible shipping, protecting Canada's marine environment and helping advance Indigenous reconciliation.